

FINAL MEETING SUMMARY (v.1)

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

TANK WASTE COMMITTEE

November 6, 2001

Richland, WA

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This is only a summary of issues and actions in this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of ideas discussed or opinions given, and should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.

Introduction

Chair Leon Swenson opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and reminded everyone that the Tank Waste Committee would meet by itself in the morning and participate in a joint meeting with the Budgets and Contracts Committee in the afternoon. Introductions were made. The committee approved the August and October meeting summaries. Ken Bracken suggested committee members be identified in the meeting summaries.

Committee Business: Clarification of Tank Waste Committee Policy Issues

Since the committee's previous meeting, Leon Swenson and Vice Chair Doug Huston had worked on the committee's work planning table to further clarify the committee's policy questions for the issue managers. A goal of the agenda item was for the committee to prioritize its issues to determine which issues can be deferred so that committee members can participate in the Ad Hoc Task Force formed at the November Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) meeting. The committee evaluated revisions to the work-planning table.

Issue: Public Communications

- Jeff Luke questioned whether the committee would be working to increase support for the Waste Treatment Plant or whether it would evaluate if the U.S. Department of Energy-Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP) were making effective use of all public involvement opportunities. Leon Swenson explained that the purpose was that even though DOE-ORP is obligated to meet certain

requirements, the committee might want to evaluate whether DOE-ORP is making the best use of public input, if the appropriate members of the public are involved, and whether any other services could be offered.

- Committee members discussed the fact that DOE-ORP is required to provide public comment opportunities for many permitting documents, although being required to do so does not mean it is effective. The committee could provide advice to DOE-ORP on how to reach the broadest spectrum of the public. The Statement of the Policy Issue was revised to “Public involvement in decision process is essential to the success of the project.”

Issue: Near-term Single Shell Tank (SST) Retrieval

- Jim Cochran urged the committee consider how alternative technologies for SST retrieval intersect with other issues, such as closure.
- Dave Johnson suggested combining this issue with the issue of Alternate Technology.
- Melinda Brown, Ecology, suggested deleting closure from the Statement of the Policy Issue since closure is not addressed directly.
- Ken Bracken noted that there is a sequence of activities that has to occur to understand anything other than past-practice sluicing. There are specified events to occur over the next 5-6 years, and the committee should follow those. He said the real policy issue is to “Make sure that DOE continues to understand retrieval in SST.”
- Suzanne Dahl, Ecology, clarified that retrieval occurs after interim stabilization.
- Doug Huston suggested removing “near term” and moving the Alternative Tank retrieval bullets into essential policy questions. Ken Bracken offered to write a revised Statement of the Policy Issue.
- Roger Stanley, Ecology, commented that from Ecology’s perspective, the three main concepts are timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and adequacy.
- Ken Bracken commented that closure is the wrong term to describe the removal of waste from tanks to reduce risk to the public. He supports removing as much waste as possible from tanks once they have been opened.
- The committee agreed to remove “near term” from the name of the issue and combine it with the Alternative Technology issue.

Issue: CH2M Hill Hanford Group (CHG) Baseline

- Ken Bracken suggested creating one big, total baseline called the River Protection Project (RPP) Baseline.
- Issue Manager Denny Newland announced that he has started working for CHG, so now has a conflict of interest working on the baseline. He thought the issue should be reassigned to a new issue manager.

Issue: BNI Technical Risks

- Committee members agreed that Bechtel National (BNI) Technical Risks would be a subset of the Technical Risks issue.
- Jeff Luke thought the Tank Waste Committee should look at programmatic risks.

- Roger Stanley reported that Ecology is determined that the vitrification project will not go into another cycle of delay. Ecology will carefully watch the decision/work authorization process both locally and at DOE-Headquarters (DOE-HQ). He suggested the committee track programmatic risk.
- Steve Wiegman, DOE-ORP, offered to clarify which decisions DOE-ORP can make and what has to go back to DOE-HQ. The committee added, “Follow the evolving decision process, both locally and at DOE-HQ” as an issue manager To Do item.
- The committee discussed combining technical and programmatic risks into one issue. Jeff Luke commented that the two types of risk are inextricably intertwined. It is easy to say that the BNI baseline is not realistic because the programmatic risk because has too many unresolved technical issues to allow the permitting process to be completed in a timely manner. He was concerned that the permitting process could go forward, and a third party lawsuit could stop the whole project.

Issue: Space and Capacity

- Suzanne Dahl commented that optimizing space is essential for further risk reduction. Space is an issue for the vitrification plant as well as for retrieval. She suggested the committee ask whether DOE-ORP is optimizing DST space for retrieval as the second bullet under essential policy questions.
- Steve Wiegman offered to have Al Hawkins, DOE-ORP, give the committee an update on what construction approvals would be in made in the next year. There are at least six important decisions that must be made.

Issue: Tank Closure

- Melinda Brown, Ecology, explained that the regulatory structure for M-45 is a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) closure. From Ecology’s perspective, a discussion of the appropriate regulatory network is not necessary because it has already been established.
- Pam Brown suggested the committee add the policy question: “What are the science and technology challenges associated with tank closure?”
- Ken Bracken also raised the issue of operational closure as an item to be tracked under this work plan item.

Issue: Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

- Suzanne Dahl, Ecology, thought the Statement of the Policy issue is misleading because the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement does not relate to closure, but more to the Immobilized Low Activity Waste (ILAW) melter.
- Dave Bartus suggested using the term “operationally closed” rather than “inactive” in describing tanks.

Issue: Tank waste return flows from treatment and secondary waste streams

- The committee decided this issue was a subset of technical risk and moved it to the Risks issue.

TPA Agency Needs

The title of this column was changed to list all the relevant agencies: DOE-ORP, DOE-Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL), Ecology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington Department of Health (WDOH). Ecology will submit its comments on the workplan issues after further internal discussion. DOE-RL's primary needs involve supporting infrastructure for the vitrification plant.

Emerging Issue Update: Potential Fundamental Changes in Project Direction

Steve Wiegman, DOE-ORP, distributed the handout he presented at the November HAB meeting. He emphasized that DOE-ORP has not made any decisions to change the direction of the waste treatment project; before it does it will fully understand the relevant issues, criteria, and public values. DOE-ORP expects to discuss the issue with Ecology. The meeting of the four agency leads with Assistant Energy Secretary Jessie Roberson yesterday might also impact future directions. Steve also distributed a handout of Harry Boston's September 6th presentation to the HAB and a handout from a presentation made at Amelia Island.

Committee Discussion

- Al Conklin, WDOH, asked whether anything in the new concept affects the tremendous permitting rush for the vitrification plant. Steve Wiegman assured him that the concept has nothing to do with the initial commissioning of the plant. The current official baseline involves shutting the plant down in 2018 and building another one. The agencies should evaluate what that plan means to the TPA milestones in 2018. Steve Wiegman emphasized that Harry Boston intends to proceed with the existing plan for the first vitrification plant, but does not intend to build another plant.
- Leon Swenson commented that the HAB is concerned that this concept is an excuse to delay construction of the vitrification plant. Steve Wiegman explained that both DOE-ORP and Jessie Roberson intend for the plan to provide greater support for building the plant.
- Jeff Luke asked whether DOE-ORP and BNI staff are looking at the throughput for the facility being proposed for the permitting process compared to the throughput that will make the project "work". He was concerned that the numbers do not match. Steve Wiegman noted that it was a very important question; maximal throughput to ensure the success of the project must be linked to the permitting process. Al Conklin, WDOH, emphasized that all assumptions for the approval will be based on throughput.
- Steve Wiegman noted that there are two fundamental issues related to permitting 1) that DOE-ORP has the necessary throughput information for the permits, as the facility is currently perceived, and 2) that if DOE-ORP makes any changes for optimization to the plant, the permits will be affected. Steve Wiegman has not seen any finalized plans, but emphasized that Harry Boston's goal is to optimize the output of the plant regardless of Phase II. Al Conklin pointed out that any alteration of the plant would affect the permit. The numbers for the permit are set

in concrete; if there is any consideration of increasing throughput ten years from now, that should be addressed now.

- Pam Brown asked if any alternate separation technology is being seriously considered. Steve Wiegman said "yes", but no designs have been revised. DOE-ORP is looking at technologies for sulfates. He emphasized that the project is being designed as currently conceived. If there were a significant design improvement, it would be considered as soon as possible.
- Pam Brown commented that Jessie Roberson and others at DOE-HQ support the vitrification plant, but that Bob Card, DOE-HQ, was looking at slowing down the project because of community impacts.
- Denny Newland asked whether DOE-ORP is seriously considering interim or operational closure and whether it would like HAB input on these issues. Steve Wiegman answered "yes" to both questions and noted that DOE-ORP is starting to explore the idea with Ecology.
- Suzanne Dahl, Ecology, said that if DOE-ORP is serious about optimizing the plant within the first few years of operation, then that should be accounted for in the design systems and permitting immediately, and it must be translated to the BNI contractual requirements. Steve Wiegman said that there are provisions in the contract to optimize the plant. Al Conklin agreed with Suzanne Dahl that the changes should be considered immediately. WDOH is currently reviewing draft applications; any changes on throughput would need to be considered now for the applications of the permits.
- Roger Stanley, Ecology, said Ecology met with Harry Boston last week and had been assured that it was still a concept and that DOE-ORP did not have any plans to make changes in the near term. Ecology would be concerned with any potential impacts to the plan. Steve Wiegman conveyed that Harry Boston wants to first consider how to approach tank closure as the Central Plateau closes. Roger Stanley emphasized that there are many regulatory issues that must be resolved before making tank closure decisions.
- Dave Johnson asked whether there is any timeline for updating the baseline. Steve Wiegman answered that that would be a topic for the joint afternoon meeting with the Budgets and Contracts Committee. Huge cash flow is required by law to maintain the schedules, and DOE-ORP does not believe that level of funding is attainable.
- Jeff Luke reiterated the request he made at the November HAB meeting: He would like DOE-ORP to provide the HAB with the baseline under the current funding scenario, not under the privatization baseline.
- Suzanne Dahl, Ecology, responded to Steve Wiegman's comment that DOE-ORP wants to look at retrieval choices and closure in reference to the Central Plateau work. She emphasized that the Central Plateau work is looking at risk scenarios, which might apply to studies of allowable waste leakage in the tank farms during retrieval. However, it is not appropriate to consider the risk involved for leaving waste in the tanks. RCRA says 99% or more of the waste should be removed. The TPA says to remove 99% if possible, but it can be adjusted depending on technology limits. The waste that is retrievable needs to be removed; the tank farms are not a waste site. She does not think risk is the correct approach to

answer closure with regard to the tanks. Superfund evaluates risk selecting a remedy, but RCRA says clean it up as best as possible and then deal with the risk. Dave Bartus, EPA, clarified that RCRA addresses risk prevention; before the risk evaluation, the waste must be managed. RCRA and Superfund have the same approach once the waste has been managed.

- Steve Wiegman emphasized that DOE-ORP's challenge is to develop a baseline that is credible, useful, and fundable.
- Ken Bracken observed that there are many "ifs" to be answered before this issue is resolved. He emphasized that the important matter is to treat the waste.
- Jeff Luke echoed the comments of Ken Bracken and Pam Brown by observing that DOE-ORP cannot propose this scenario because it is outside the purview of RCRA. However, unless DOE-ORP makes changes, it will not receive funding for the outyears.
- Harold Heacock observed that since he has been on the HAB, the primary objective has been to get a vitrification plant. He pointed out that Hanford is receiving \$1.2 billion this year, which is the amount that the Department of Defense and Superfund receive for all their cleanup sites. The worst thing for the program would be to take a stance of "all or nothing."
- Dave Johnson asked what causes the funding spike and how it could be leveled. Steve Wiegman assured him that his question would be answered in the afternoon joint meeting. Doug Huston suggested the flattening the budget is an issue for the Budgets and Contracts Committee. Steve Wiegman explained that it is a capital investment issue that relates to how DOE-ORP manages the tanks. DOE-ORP assumes it is not a good idea to build a second plant and would like to know whether the HAB agrees with that assumption. Suzanne Dahl, Ecology, clarified that the funding spikes have always existed, but now DOE-ORP is under pressure from the current Administration to get rid of the spikes.

The committee discussed next steps it should take. Doug Huston summarized that themes of the discussion were:

- 1) An "all or nothing" approach is not appropriate.
- 2) There is a need to think creatively.
- 3) Ideas must be consistent with laws and regulations.
- 4) The public should be appropriately involved.

Jeff Luke urged the committee to go on record to encourage DOE-ORP and Ecology to discuss these concepts immediately. The committee decided that it should encourage the agencies to meet. Jim Cochran suggested that if the agencies have not met by December, the committee could offer advice. Ken Bracken suggested that an issue manager be assigned to follow the issue in case it reaches a point where advice might be needed. The committee agreed to include these issues under the Tank Closure issue on its workplan.

Committee Business: Committee Prioritization of Issues

Ruth Siguenza introduced a method for the committee to determine the relative priorities of its issues. Each committee member, Suzanne Dahl (Ecology), and Steve Wiegman

(DOE-ORP) were given a strip of seven sticky dots to place on the posters of each Essential Policy Question, listed on flip charts on the wall. The purpose of this was to help the committee decide how to focus its issue manager resources, especially given the time needed for the work of the new Ad Hoc Task Force. The balance of mission concept, beyond Phase I was added as an essential policy question within the Baseline issue on the committee's workplan.

The prioritization activity indicated that the committee appears most concerned with risks, operational closure, optimizing DST space, the balance of mission concept, and whether the treatment baseline is realistic and achievable. The committee decided that it would continue to work on the issues it identified through the exercise; other issues will be deferred so committee members can participate in the Ad Hoc Task Force. It was observed that the potential tank end states issues overlaps with the Ad Hoc Task Force. However, the Ad Hoc Task Force has to address whole 200 Area Plateau; tanks are just a part of the plateau. The committee's work planning table will be restructured so the high priority issues are listed first, and the Essential Policy Questions of highest importance will be highlighted. A listing of the results of the prioritization activity is attached at the end of this summary (see Attachment I).

For the high priority issues, the committee re-evaluated the issue manager assignments and To Do lists. Jeff Luke would like to assist on the Bechtel Treatment Baseline issue, but noted that he has limitations as an issue manager due to his employment. The committee will ask Todd Martin if he would be willing to serve as an additional issue manager on the baseline issue.

The committee also decided to leave the DOE-ORP balance of mission concept as an Essential Policy Question within the baseline issue for now.

Agency perspectives

Roger Stanley emphasized that Ecology is focused on reviewing the recovery plan submitted by DOE-ORP. Ecology's priority is to keep the vitrification plant on schedule. Leon Swenson pointed out that the committee has addressed Ecology's concern through the policy question that asks whether the current BNI baseline is realistic and achievable.

Steve Wiegman, DOE-ORP, supported the committee's prioritization.

Dave Bartus, EPA, commented on the huge range of technical challenges the project faces. The regulators have attempted to bifurcate regulatory issues into whether the knowledge to solve the problem does or does not exist.

Work Planning and Wrap-Up

There will be no committee call in November and no committee meeting in December. The next committee meeting will likely be in January.

Doug Huston will represent the committee on the Executive Issues Management Group call on November 15th. The purpose of that call is to decide the agenda for the December HAB meeting, at which the committee plans to provide an update and distribute its new workplan.

The committee would like an update on the November 5th meeting between the agency chiefs and Jessie Roberson about the Cleanup Challenges and Constraints (C3T) process.

Handouts

- Tank Waste Committee Agenda, November 6, 2001.
- Draft Tank Waste Committee Work Planning Table, October 30, 2001.
- DOE-ORP presentation on new tank treatment concept (first slide “Challenges and Opportunities”).
- DOE-ORP presentation on Office of River Protection Status, September 6, 2001.

Attendees

HAB Members and Alternates

Ken Bracken	Pam Brown	Al Conklin
Jim Cochran	Harold Heacock	Doug Huston
Dave Johnson	Jeff Luke	Denny Newland
Joe Richards	Dave Rowland	Leon Swenson

Others

Gail McClure, DOE-RL	Melinda Brown, Ecology	Allen Boldt
Joe Cruz, DOE-ORP	Laura Cusack, Ecology	Bill Hewitt
Steve Wiegman, DOE-ORP	Suzanne Dahl, Ecology	Don Woodrich
	Roger Stanley, Ecology	Suzanne Heaston, BNI
	Dave Bartus, EPA	Kim Ballinger, Critique
		Carolyn Haass, CHG
		Jim Honeyman, CHG
		Christina Richmond, EnviroIssues
		Ruth Siguenza, EnviroIssues
		Barb Wise, FH
		Peter Bengtson, PNNL
		John Stang, Tri-City Herald

ATTACHMENT I

Tank Waste Committee - Hanford Advisory Board Prioritization of Essential Policy Questions November 6, 2001

1. Identify potential showstoppers that would keep project from working. (River Protection Project Risks) – 18 dots
2. What steps can be taken for consideration of the operational closure concept? (Tank Closure) – 16 dots
3. Is the current Bechtel National baseline realistic and achievable? (River Protection Project Baseline) – 10 dots
4. ORP balance of mission concept beyond Phase I (River Protection Project Baseline) – 10 dots
5. Is ORP optimizing double shell tank space for retrieval? (Space and Capacity) – 10 dots
6. What are the potential tank end-states? (Tank Closure) – 7 dots
7. Does the current CH2M Hill Hanford Group baseline comply with the Tri-Party Agreement – meeting deadlines, administrative orders, consent decrees? (River Protection Project Baseline) – 3 dots
8. What is the plan for implementation of new retrieval technologies? (Single Shell Tank Retrieval) – 3 dots
9. Does the current Bechtel National baseline meet Tri-Party Agreement requirements? (River Protection Project Baseline) – 2 dots
10. Does ORP need to construct new double shell tanks at any point before the tank waste treatment project is complete? (Space and Capacity) – 2 dots
11. Is ORP making effective use of all public involvement opportunities? (Public Communications) – 1 dot
12. What is the current status of single shell tank retrieval with respect to Tri-Party Agreement requirements? (Single Shell Tank Retrieval) – 1 dot
13. What are the science and technology challenges? (Tank Closure) – 1 dot
14. What are the near term plans for single shell tank retrieval? (Single Shell Tank Retrieval) – 0 dots
15. What are the risks associated with these potential end-states? (Tank Closure) – 0 dots
16. Does the current CH2M Hill Hanford Group baseline adequately provide for protection of the environment? (River Protection Project Baseline) – 0 dots
17. What is the appropriate level of Stewardship? (Tank Closure) – 0 dots
18. What technologies are most effective at minimizing leakage losses from the tanks during waste retrieval? (Single Shell Tank Retrieval) – 0 dots
19. Is ORP doing a thorough job of investigating new technologies? (Single Shell Tank Retrieval) – 0 dots
20. How will this environmental impact statement affect the construction and operation of the vitrification plant and the disposal of the vitrification plant product (immobilized low activity waste)? (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) – 0 dots
21. Does this environmental impact statement comply with National Environmental Policy Act requirements? (Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) – 0 dots
22. How will the Waste Treatment Project deal with these flows in order to minimize their impact on the vitrification plant operations and the environment? (Tank Waste Return Flows from Treatment and Secondary Waste Streams) – 0 dots